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PARROT BUILDING IN THE OPEN: AT PARK HILL, NEW FOREST.

By W. F. RAWNSLEY.

Communicated by F. DUCANE GODMAN, D.C.L., F.R.S.

(PLATE I.)

IN the 'Avicultural Journal' of November, 1900, there appeared a short account of the nest which our Parrot had built on the roof of the farmhouse at Pondhead, a small property attached to Park Hill, Lyndhurst. As the Parrot has, alas! disappeared, and the nest must in time disappear also, I propose to give a fuller account of this unique and interesting structure, with illustrations of it in various stages of its growth, which have been taken by, and are obtainable from, Mr. F. G. Short, of Lyndhurst.

The Parrot, a South American bird, known as *Myiopsittacus monachus*, and often called the Quaker Parrot, from its grey head and breast, is elsewhere of an apple-green, with very pointed tail and wings, and about ten inches in length from beak to tail. It was caught by my farm-bailiff in the heather of the open forest close to the farm in August, 1899; and, as it disappeared about the time fixed for the Coronation (June 26th, 1902), its history, as far as we know it, extends over rather less than three years, during the last two of which it had been flying at liberty round the farm.

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When captured it had a partially clipped wing and a deformed foot, looking as though it had been caught in a trap. It was put into a cage, and kept at the farm through the winter. In the spring the bailiff's wife gave it to my wife, and we kept it in a cage in the drawing-room. But it never would talk, and only screamed in a harsh voice; so that when in June, 1900, it escaped whilst the cage was being cleaned, and, as its wing-feathers had grown again, flew off, we did not greatly regret it. It flew almost at once to the farm not a quarter of a mile away, and fed daily with the chickens, but did not allow itself to be taken, though it was never far from the poultry-yard.

In October, 1900, it was observed to be busy on the roof of the farmhouse, weaving a tunnel-shaped bower with twigs, which it did in a very well-chosen place where the thatched roof ran into a brick chimney, getting both shelter from the wind and warmth. This tunnel was about a yard long, and the mouth of it is the lower orifice in *fig. 1*. In December, as it got colder, the bird changed the direction of the entrance, and it retired to this tunnel every night, and lived out the winter there. In the spring of 1901 it added another tunnel parallel to the first, the two openings side by side; but soon it blocked up this, and built another above it, and then again turned the mouth of the tunnel round towards the roof-tiles (see *fig. 1*), in order apparently to prevent the wet south-west wind blowing direct into its tunnel.

It always occupied the latest part of the structure, often sitting in the mouth of the opening by day, but retiring inside for the night. The structure was now a yard and a half or two yards long. In April it became necessary to put new thatch on the roof, but this was done without disturbing the bird or its building, and it soon became very active, snipping off the twigs from a hawthorn hedge, and carrying them in its beak, screeching as it flew, with a very quick beat of its thin pointed wings, and with its pin-tail never spread. It worked most industriously, taking a long time to fix each twig, and weaving them together very neatly at the opening, which was about six inches across, and all the way along the tunnel inside. The outside twigs, though they all looked rather haphazard, were so interwoven that no wind ever displaced them.

By May it had greatly enlarged the pile, and had brought it



down and fastened it ingeniously to the elbow of the stack-pipe, which gave increased stability, but made a bend in the tunnel necessary. The whole structure was now seven or eight feet long, and nearly three feet across at the lower end, and with this the bird seemed content.

Thinking it a pity that it should not have a chance to breed, we looked out for a mate for it in the summer. There was no possibility of telling whether it was a male or a female as it was flying about, but we argued, from its nest-building industry, that it was a female, and got what was said to be a male, and, catching our bird at night in its tunnel, we put the pair into a cage. They agreed very well, but showed no signs which could certify that they were male and female. Soon we let them both fly, and, though they would keep together, the new one never offered the slightest assistance in carrying sticks or building, though the old one began to add a good deal to the existing pile. It is noteworthy that it never used any but the prickly twigs of the hawthorn as long as the hedgerows were bare, but when the leaves came on the hedges it would have no more to do with them, but betook itself to the hazel pea-sticks in the farm-garden, and bit off the topmost twigs. Some of these were visible near the spout-elbow, and many more on the roof-tiles. But, though the new mate did not work, he did a good deal of mischief, for he picked off the small green apples from the orchard-trees, and dropped them on the ground in such numbers that we were obliged to catch him and shut him up; and, lest he should have taught this trick to the old one, about which we were uncertain, for we could with difficulty tell them apart when loose, we caught and caged them both until such time as the apples should be big enough to defend themselves. But, alas! a rat got in one night and killed the new mate. We set the other free, and no more apples were plucked.

In the autumn we noticed that the Parrot took longer flights, sometimes going a distance of a quarter of a mile, and often joining a flock of Starlings, with whom it would alight and apparently feed in the park or on the lawn, and fly with them to the big trees; but it never went off altogether. It passed another winter (1901-2) safely, and was again surprisingly active in adding to, and, we thought, rather spoiling, its nest, changing its doorway again, and making it as seen in *fig. 2*. It would fly up to

and over the house at Park Hill, and we were often afraid that some of Mr. Lascelles' Hawks "at hack" might kill it. But it survived, and I never saw any bird chase it either "for food or play." It was almost always to be found in or near the farm-yard, and was a great pleasure to watch; it seemed so busy and full of purpose, and looked so bright sitting outside or just in the mouth of its home.

It was last seen at the time of the Coronation as first fixed, and after June, 1902, we saw it no more. Whether it departed with its friends the Starlings, or was taken by a Hawk or a Rat—we incline to suspect the latter—we never knew; but the place thereof knoweth it no more, and now we look at the empty nest not without a feeling of sadness.

Since writing the above, I have seen, in 'Bird Notes' for October, 1902, a notice of this Parrot, which is there called *Bolborhynchus monachus*, and is stated to be the only Parrot which is known to build a nest, weaving its huge structure on to the ends of branches, and building each spring a new one on the top of the old. The nest, which is usually entered from below, consists of an antechamber, with the true nest behind—the latter lined with grass, thorny twigs being used exclusively for building purposes. The bird is said to have an excruciating screech, though it can learn to talk well. It is further stated that a pair in the possession of Mr. Sidney Buxton built a nest five feet high and six feet in circumference, and that other pairs have also built in captivity.

NOTES ON THE ORNITHOLOGY OF OXFORDSHIRE,
1899-1901.

BY O. V. APLIN, F.L.S.

WHERE no other locality is mentioned, the notes refer to the parish of Bloxham.

1899.

January 5th.—News from Mr. W. H. Gale of a Corn-Crake caught at Nuneham on the 3rd, and then quite at home in one of the greenhouses.

19th.—Dr. Routh told me that about five years ago he saw on several days at various spots between Epwell, Shutford, and Sibford a pair of Hoopoes. It was in the late spring. He is well acquainted with the appearance of this bird.

26th.—Fieldfares and Redwings have been fairly abundant all the season. To-day there are a good many Song-Thrushes about the grass-fields.

28th.—Bullfinches numerous, and very destructive to plum-buds for some days.

February.—The floods in the Sorbrook valley in the early part of this month were the largest we have had for a good many years. Violent storms at sea lately, and here also about the 13th,

26th.—A Song-Thrush's nest, nearly finished, in the shrubbery.

March 10th.—Bullfinches have been singing a good deal this last month. Several pairs of Peewits to-day in a rough grass-field on this side of Duns Tew.

16th.—Blackbird sang here for the first time this season, to the best of my knowledge; this is a very late beginning.

20th.—Mistle-Thrush's nest in orchard, apparently finished. Bitterly cold weather; snow last night, and the thermometer at 24° this morning.

23rd.—Very cold dry weather lately; severe frosts.

24th.—Ring- and Stock-Doves cooing, and other signs of softer weather.

26th.—A nest of the Long-tailed Tit, half finished, in a broom-bush.

29th.—Saw two Chiffchaffs, and heard one in song. The hedges show no sign of green, and the aspect of the country generally is quite brown.

April 8th.—When Otter-hunting in the Cherwell valley, just above Somerton, saw six pairs of Wild Ducks (all doubtless breeding birds), a Snipe, and a Green Sandpiper. Mr. Foster-Melliar told me he saw a Blackcap in his garden on March 19th; this bird had probably wintered there.

15th.—Heard the Wryneck. Not for many years have we had such persistently inclement weather in spring. No summer migrants except Chiffchaffs and Wheatears reported as yet, and the Chiffchaff is almost silent.

18th.—Several Redstarts. Cuckoo.

19th.—Swallow, Willow-Wren, Tree-Pipit.

22nd.—Visited Clattercote Reservoir with Mr. A. H. Macpherson, and saw there three Crested Grebes, a drake and two duck Teal, Dabchicks, Coots, Moorhens, and two Common Sandpipers. Noticed arrival of Sand-Martin, Whitethroat, and Ray's Wagtail.

25th.—House-Martin at Charlbury.

26th.—Visited Blenheim with Mr. J. Whitaker, and noticed a good many Coots on the lake. Blackcap near Glympton.

27th.—Mr. Fowler and I saw in Port Meadow, Oxford, seven or eight Dunlins, and five Golden Plover on the wing. Mr. Darbey told me he received a Grey Phalarope from the neighbourhood of Oxford in the middle of February, and a Corn-Crake which was killed by flying against the telegraph-wires on the 19th inst. He also showed me two Crossbills (green and red), killed at Pusey (three miles over our borders) early in the year. Noticed the Sedge Warbler.

30th.—Lesser Whitethroat. Mr. Darbey informed me this month that he received an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull in the early part of the year, which had been shot near Oxford. Mr. G. W. Bradshaw has recorded an adult bird of this species, shot at Caversham Lock on the 30th April, 1898 (Zool. 1899, p. 136).

May 10th.—Mr. Fowier told me that he saw several Lesser Redpolls in Christ Church meadow this morning. I saw one there in the afternoon. Mr. Trench, of Lincoln College, told me he heard Stone Curlews passing over Lincoln College, calling, about 11 p.m. last night. He is well acquainted with the bird.

11th.—Swift and Whinchat.

12th.—Mistle-Thrush has been in song constantly up to this date; more than one sing in or close to the garden. I never heard it in better form than it was this morning. At times one bird sings a few notes in the manner of a Song-Thrush, but the song usually consists only of the rollicking strain, followed sometimes by a few confused shrill hard notes, lower in tone.

13th.—Several of the twenty-eight young Rooks shot to-day had more or less white chins, and some had part of the under mandible yellowish white, one almost entirely so. I always notice this variation at this particular rookery.

15th.—Spotted Flycatcher and Turtle-Dove.

16th.—A few Nightingales visited the immediate neighbourhood this season. Two or three pairs are established on the Grove estate, and a nest was taken later on in Bloxham Gate spinney (a nest at the bottom of the plantation last year got off safely); one was heard at Milton on the 28th April, and I heard one near Lower Worton to-day. Mr. Charles Jeffreys informs me that he has preserved a Peregrine Falcon which was shot at Kirtlington on the 16th February.

18th.—A Redstart has a nest and seven eggs in one of the new nesting-boxes here.

June 6th.—Heard the Mistle-Thrush singing. It sang regularly and daily until the end of May.

7th.—A Mistle-Thrush perched on the house-roof ridge. The next day it settled on the stable-roof.

8th.—Heard Nightingale at South Newington.

15th to 4th July.—Away from home.

July 8th.—Goldfinches have been seen feeding young lately in my man's garden, which adjoins mine.

21st.—In consequence of the very dry weather, Starlings, Robins, and Warblers (Garden Warblers and Lesser Whitethroats chiefly, with some Blackcaps) have been destructive to red currants, and Blackbirds and Song-Thrushes to gooseberries.

August 3rd.—The drought continues with great severity. Wheat harvest began here on the 24th ult. Birds (Starlings and Robins included) have eaten great quantities of bush-fruit.

10th.—The country is wonderfully brown. Apples falling off the trees; plums will not swell properly; butter is very scarce; outdoor peaches already ripe. The air is wonderfully clear and dry, and the golden mellow light of the afternoons remarkably beautiful. But it is the most destructive drought experienced for many years. In proof of the dryness of the air, it may be mentioned that it is difficult to harvest beans, the pods bursting when they are touched. Wasps are scarce, strange to say.

11th.—Many Swifts, noisy at evening.

13th.—Fewer Swifts.

15th.—Still a few Swifts. A good rain fell at last.

23rd.—The drought has resumed its sway. Harvest finished. Blackbirds very destructive to ripening plums.

25th.—On a barley-stubble, very foul, and gay with poppies which have flowered since the barley was cut, I saw a flock of over two hundred Turtle-Doves, feeding almost in the manner of Starlings. There is a spinney of ash-poles and thorn-bushes near there, where some are bred, and all these birds were probably bred in the district. The Turtle-Dove has increased very much in North Oxon of late years. Twenty years ago we considered it rather uncommon.

26th.—In the 'Field' of this date it is stated by Mr. J. M. Marshall, of Wallingford, that a pair of Hobbies had recently bred in Brightwell Park, and that a keeper had shot one old and two young birds. Mr. Darbey afterwards told me he had a female from Brightwell this month. I was talking to-day to a man (about thirty years of age) about the decrease in the number of Fieldfares which visit us, when he told me that when quite a boy he killed forty-five at three shots.

27th.—Flock of about a dozen Mistle-Thrushes.

30th.—Another rain; the drought somewhat abated. Mr. Bartlett showed me two Crossbills which were shot in the larches on the hill at Bodicote in the late autumn of 1897. They were in very fresh plumage, of a brick-red mottled with yellow; the latter colour more clearly defined in one than in the other. Also a variety of the Hedge-Sparrow; it had two or three white

feathers in the wings, breast and belly white with the exception of a few feathers, scapulars white, back nearly all white, crown partly white. It was shot at Great Bourton in March, 1898. Also two adult male Pied Woodpeckers—one from Tusmore, killed two years ago; the other shot in the neighbourhood of Banbury more recently.

September 1st.—Flock of Mistle-Thrushes. A Wheatear and a party of about fifteen Pied Wagtails on a ploughing. A Red-legged Partridge, fully moulted, had the legs, bill, and eyelids orange instead of red; it was a heavy bird, requiring 18 oz. and a sixpence to balance it.

5th.—Saw a Clouded Yellow Butterfly in a potato-field. Red Admirals are very abundant, and feed on fallen plums and on those hanging on the trees which the Blackbirds have pecked. 81° in the shade.

8th.—Shot a very curious Partridge on Bloxham Grove. The rusty colour on the head, face, and throat very bright and well developed. The grey vermiculated feathers on the breast from the throat downwards mostly dashed with the same rusty yellow. Sides of the belly and rump the same, and many of the flank-feathers tipped and splashed with the same. The bright rusty yellow of the upper throat extending over the breast and belly suggests the colouration of *Perdix daurica*. I exhibited the bird at the British Ornithologists' Club meeting in April, 1900. Five or six brace of birds killed in the same field the same week showed no signs of abnormal colouring.

9th.—A vast flock of Linnets (perhaps between one and two thousand) on a barley-stubble, very foul with knot-grass and other weeds, at Milcomb.

10th.—About dusk a Landrail rose from a strip of roadside grass, and flew at once over a rather high hedge close to me.

13th.—Very big flock of Peewits in a field of thin swedes. Partridges are fairly numerous and strong this season, though scarcer on hilly ground than they should be, doubtless in consequence of the great drought. On the 25th August I saw an old Partridge drinking at a spring, a thing I never happened to see before. Of "cover" there is practically none, swedes having been an almost entire failure. Red-legged Partridges are more numerous than ever. To-day three brace out of thirteen

and a half at Milcomb and South Newington were young Red-legs.

14th.—News from Mr. Fowler of Hobbies haunting a great roost of Swallows at Kingham (*vide* Zool. 1899, p. 476).

15th. — Swallows and Martins congregating on the roof of this house this morning; being of rough "stonesfield slate," facing east and standing high, this roof is a favourite gathering-place.

22nd.—A great congregation of Swallows and Martins on the roof until after 8 a.m. When they flew up they were like a swarm of bees. They returned to the roof two or three times. This has been going on for some days. Mr. Bartlett showed me two Eared Grebes (*Podiceps nigricollis*) over the moult, or nearly so, which were shot on a pond about three miles north-west of Banbury on the 19th inst. I afterwards bought them. They were proved by dissection to be a male and female, and are probably a pair of adult birds which had bred, or attempted to breed, in the neighbourhood. Although their irides were bright yellow, not red, I do not think they were birds of the previous year which had passed the summer with us without breeding, as is, I believe, the case with Grebes in the first season after that in which they are hatched; because the eyes of Grebes vary a good deal (perhaps according to the season), and because the male still exhibits some rufous colour on the sides of the head. This colour is not shown by birds in the spring following that in which they are hatched, and is certainly not assumed in autumn. The birds had not been seen on the pond on which they were shot before the morning they were killed, but there are several large reservoirs in the neighbourhood—one of them not more than four or five miles away—which would have afforded them a congenial summer home. Three days after they were killed their bills were blackish, and their legs blackish olive, or blackish with a strong tinge of green. Upper parts of the body nearly as dark as the summer dress. Throat white, the white extending nearly to the nape in the female. In the male the sides of the head tinged with rufous. Fore-neck intermediate between summer and winter plumage. Breast greyish. Mr. T. A. Coward kindly sent for my inspection a male shot in Anglesey on the 1st August, 1892 (Zool. 1892, p. 358). I think it was hatched in

1891, and had not moulted in the summer of 1892. The sides of the head are tinged with brown, not with rufous as in my male. Plumage of the upper parts has a worn appearance.

25th.—On high ground near Tadmarton Heath, late in the afternoon, found many Meadow-Pipits on stubble and among "seeds." Three brace out of twelve and a half at Milcomb were Red-legged Partridges.

27th.—Chiffchaff in song in the garden.

28th.—The congregation of Swallows and Martins, especially the former, has been smaller the last two mornings.

29th.—Very few on the roof, but a good many about the fields in the day. Many Pied Wagtails on the fresh ploughings—quite a flock in two places. Coal-Tit with spring note.

October 4th.—Mr. C. Jefferys on this date received from Kirtlington an immature male Hobby. A Marsh-Harrier, believed to be a three-year-old male, wounded and captured on the 2nd inst., has been recorded by Mr. T. Terry Cooper, of Swallowfield, Reading (Zool. 1900, p. 143).

6th.—Again (after an interval) a good many Swallows and Martins on the roof. A Landrail shot in the Milcomb Road allotments. Very scarce this year. I only heard one in the spring.

7th.—No Swallows or Martins on the roof to-day, and hardly any to be seen anywhere. Those on the roof yesterday were no doubt passing migrants. A Starling here imitates the Green Woodpecker's cry pretty well.

8th.—A few Swallows passing slowly westward, although at first sight they appeared to be merely hawking for insects.

11th.—A good many Goldfinches about the thistly fields on Milcomb hills. Blackbirds and Song-Thrushes swarm in the hedges and in Milcomb gorse, where there is a wonderful crop of hips, haws, and blackberries, the bushes of the last-named looking perfectly black at the top with ripe fruit. Flocks of Meadow-Pipits in long grass on hillside.

18th.—Great and Blue Tits carefully searching a row of large plants of "cottage kail" infested with the grey aphid, which has done so much damage this season.

19th.—A Humming-bird Hawk Moth (numerous this year) at a petunia blossom.

20th.—News of a Woodcock shot in potato-field at Hook Norton on the 7th.

28th.—Redwings in the hedges, which look quite red in the distance from the heavy crop of haws. At the end of this month a Grey Phalarope (now in my possession) was picked up at Kirtlington. Mr. Darbey told me that he had a male Peregrine Falcon from Tar Wood this month.

November 6th.—News of an adult Gannet caught alive in a field at Lower Tadmerton on the 1st inst. Chaffinch sang all its song, but poorly; and again the next day.

7th.—News from Mr. R. Surman, of Oxford, that he had in a cage a bird he believed to be a hybrid between the Blackbird and Song-Thrush. He caught it outside Worcester College gardens, where it was probably hatched. I called to see the bird in July, 1900, when it had much the shape of a Blackbird, a dull orange bill, back brownish black, and under parts mottled brown. At the end of August, 1901, I saw it again; it was partly in moult. Upper parts chiefly a dark rich bronze-brown or umber-brown. Under parts mottled. Bill yellow with a brownish tinge. Mr. Surman said it sang a little, and that the song was peculiar, although something like a Blackbird's.

8th.—Saw in the large meadow called Bestmoor, in the Cherwell valley above Somerton, a flock of about one hundred and fifty Golden Plovers, with a lot of Peewits.

10th.—A few Fieldfares about. A flock seen going to roost in the evergreens at Great Tew on the 8th. Great numbers of Greenfinches, Starlings, Wood-Pigeons, and other birds roost there. Two Goldfinches in the garden, and several about the Milcomb hills.

18th.—Fieldfares often passing over now.

28th.—A good many Fieldfares and Redwings. News of a Fork-tailed Petrel picked up dead in a ploughed field at South Stoke about the middle of the month, after a strong gale from S.W. and W.

December 2nd.—Three and a half out of ten and a half brace of Partridges between Milcomb, Barford, and South Newington were Red-legs. Many Fieldfares and Redwings.

8th.—Three or four wild Snipe in the Sorbrook valley here; scarce birds in these upper valleys.

11th.—Sharp frost. A Snipe at South Newington.

12th.—Three inches of snow on ground.

13th.—Snow all the forenoon.

14th.—Thermometer down to 17°, and 20° at 9.30 a.m.

16th.—Severe weather. Stock-Doves feeding on turnip-tops.

19th.—Steady cold thaw.

28th.—The want of rain during the autumn is severely felt after the dry summer. Several wells, never known to fail previously, are now dry. Three or four Bramblings shot from a flock near the village.

31st.—Large flock of Bramblings, with Chaffinches and a few Sparrows, near the village.

I find I have met with the Barred Woodpecker on about half a dozen occasions this year in the immediate neighbourhood of Bloxham. It may be slightly on the increase. As it is not persecuted in any way, and is not known to or seen by one person in five hundred at the most, it is strange that it does not become numerous. It probably suffers much less than the Green Woodpecker from severe weather, as it does not feed on the ground; but it seems to be a law of nature that Woodpeckers should *not* be numerous.

I am indebted to Mr. Heatley Noble for the following interesting notes:—

In the shooting season of 1894-5 an immature White-tailed Eagle remained for some weeks in Fawley Court Deer Park, and enjoyed the protection of Mr. Mackenzie, who on one occasion saw the Eagle settle in a tree just over his head. Mr. Noble also saw the bird.

A female Smew was killed on the river at Hennerton about 1881.

In 1892 or 1893 a pair of Pied Flycatchers are said by the Hon. and Rev. A. Parker to have nested in his garden at Bix.

The Royston Crow is occasionally seen in the neighbourhood of Henley-on-Thames, but is rare.

Mr. Noble saw a Stone Curlew three times in one day, getting quite close to it, on a rabbit-warren at Stonor, on Nov. 13th, 1899. This is the latest date in the autumn on which I have known the "Curloo" to occur in Oxon.

A female Scaup was shot on the river at Hennerton on the 13th November, 1888. The Tufted Duck, Pochard, Wigeon, and Golden-eye all occur on that part of the river in winter.

Mr. J. A. Bucknill informs me that he saw about seven Common Terns on Port Meadow, Oxford, as late as December in 1891, and that one was shot on the 11th, and brought to him. In February, 1893, he saw two on Otmoor, and another at Bablock Hythe. A Green Sandpiper was shot (and brought to him) on the river at Oxford on the 30th November, 1891, during a heavy flood.

Mr. Bucknill saw a drake Golden-eye in full plumage on Clattercote Reservoir on the 14th December, 1893. It is uncommon in this dress in Oxon. He also saw a flock of about twenty Grey Geese on Otmoor during a very deep and heavy flood about December, 1893. He believes three were killed by a local gunner, but they were not identified.

1900.

January 2nd.—Very heavy rain last night. Blue Tit sings.

5th.—Corn-Bunting sings. Large flock of Bramblings near Milcomb. This is not the same flock as that seen near Bloxham.

6th.—Coal Tit with spring note. A Bittern was flushed on the 16th December last from a ditch bordering an osier-bed within a mile of Reading (but in Oxon) by Mr. W. T. Crawshay, of Caversham Park, who recorded it in the 'Field' of this date.

15th.—A good deal of rain recently.

19th —A male Bittern shot by a keeper at Shiplake. It had been observed several times during the previous five weeks, and "his boom could be heard occasionally in the nights." Recorded by the Rev. J. Climenson, of Shiplake Vicarage, in a letter to the 'Reading Mercury' of the 20th.

20th.—A second male Bittern (weighing 2 lb. 7 oz.) shot in the same place by the same man. It was seen in the flesh by Mr. Bradshaw, who wrote me word of it. The 'Oxford Times' of this date reports a Bittern shot at Pinkle Lock, near Eynsham, by Mr. G. Longford, and preserved by Mr. George Barson. Many others occurred in different parts of the country about this time.

February 3rd.—Seven inches of snow on the ground; no

drifting. Bullfinches eating plum-blossom buds. A number of Bramblings with Chaffinches near Hook Norton reported yesterday. Wind north.

6th.—Sharp frost. Mr. Coombs, of Chipping Norton, showed me a Buzzard, shot at Ditchley in the early autumn of last year; also a Crossbill—an adult orange-coloured bird—one of a dozen which haunted some larches near that town in the winter of 1898-99.

7th.—Very severe frost. Mistle-Thrush eating holly-berries within a yard of my window. The berries are now nearly finished; last winter they were hardly touched. News from Mr. Darby of a Grey Shrike shot at Nuneham on the 5th.

8th.—Severe frost (14°), and only 19° at 10 a.m.

11th.—Birds very tame. Mistle-Thrush eating berries of *Cotoneaster microphylla* trained on house, and from another bush in front of the dining-room window.

12th.—I saw a Hedge-Sparrow eat some grains of wheat given to the poultry. We have here a Hedge-Sparrow with one or two of the outer primaries in one wing white; these are conspicuous when it flies.

13th.—Great numbers of birds come to be fed. Intense frost.

14th.—Another deep snow last night. It lies about ten inches deep on the lawn, and there are huge drifts. Mistle-Thrush eating berries of *Cotoneaster simondsii*, which are seldom eaten by birds. Rook and Jackdaws with the other birds at the food put out in the garden, and about a hundred Starlings this morning. Where these have come from it is hard to say, for in severe weather it is usually difficult to see half a dozen about the village. They have gradually increased at the feeding-place from day to day, and must have some means of communicating the fact that food is to be had here to their fellows.

15th.—Furious storm of rain and snow.

17th.—Saw a big flock of Ducks flying over.

19th.—Rapid thaw and heavy rain. Blackbird sings, and Chaffinch.

20th.—A flock of birds on a stubble consisted of about half Bramblings (the males getting very dark), and the rest Chaffinches and Tree-Sparrows. Very big floods in the valleys.

21st.—Ground white with fresh snow.

22nd.—Very mild.

24th.—The floods have been larger than any since 1894.

26th.—Mr. Fowler writes from Kingham :—" I rarely see a Stonechat here ; but yesterday, in the morning, I found a pair—the male in such gorgeous spring plumage that he shone resplendent even at a distance. In the afternoon the rector and I found several more. All were on hedge-tops by the roadside, in places which here are never their haunts." Vast flocks of Bramblings near the village at the end of the month. Over five inches of rain fell this month.

March 3rd.—Only a small number of Bramblings in their old haunt. To judge by the amount of their respective songs to be heard, Blackbirds have withstood the severe weather better than the Song-Thrushes.

5th.—Crossing an upland field near the village through which a ditch runs, a Jack-Snipe rose under my feet as I crossed the ditch. A large flock of Peewits in the meadows near Somerton, though some were at the breeding-places on the fallows, and had the spring calls. A big flock of Linnets on a clover-field.

12th.—Mr. Bartlett showed me a male Tufted Duck, shot at Wroxton recently. Also a blue-billed Hawfinch, shot there from a flock of twenty, and several Bramblings, which had been very abundant in the east of Banbury, twenty having been killed at a couple of shots ; several of them were females.

17th.—About sundown a great flock of Starlings passed over, going S.E. Although they were so high up that they looked no larger than Tomtits, the rushing noise they made attracted my attention. Possibly they were going to a large fox-cover called Dene Hill, for I heard later that such vast numbers had roosted there that they had caused the Foxes to vacate it.

18th.—About three inches of snow on the ground, and snow-showers.

24th.—A Robin building in one of the boxes.

27th.—During a long and unsuccessful search for spring migrants, I saw two Barred Woodpeckers, a female Redpoll, and some Bramblings, including a good dark male : it is very late for this bird to be with us.

30th.—Another Barred Woodpecker.

April 3rd.—Weather still very cold.

4th.—Robin in box has one egg.

10th.—Wood-Pigeons come here every evening to feed on ivy-berries. A Chiffchaff was seen to-day by my brother in the Cherwell valley; it was silent. Hedges show no sign of green.

12th.—Mr. Fowler saw one Chiffchaff at Kingham.

16th.—At Kingham he showed me Peewits' nests with three and four eggs, and he had seen two Swallows in the morning. We could find no Chiffchaffs, but I saw a Wheatear from the train on this side of Chipping Norton.

17th.—A Cuckoo flew over the garden.

18th.—The result of a long round in search of migrants was one Swallow seen.

19th.—Quite hot in the sun. Found one Chiffchaff. In spite of constant searches in all the most likely spots, this is the first I have seen. Tree-Pipit arrived. Hedges just showing green in places.

20th.—Redstart. Crow and two Magpies sitting.

22nd.—Hot day. Many butterflies; several Brimstones and Small Tortoiseshells, one Peacock, and a Small Garden White.

23rd.—Willow-Wren and Blackcap. Away from home until the 26th.

27th.—Cuckoo noisy.

28th.—Mr. A. Holte Macpherson and I noticed Ray's Wag-tail, Lesser Whitethroat, Whinchat, Sand-Martin, and White-throat, but did not hear a Chiffchaff during a long walk in beautiful sunny weather. Near the village we saw a very fine example of the large race of the Wheatear. It was at one time close to a cock Chaffinch, than which it was clearly a considerably larger bird.

29th.—We noticed a Nightingale in Milcomb gorse, and another near Broughton Grange; also the Grasshopper-Warbler, House-Martin, and Sedge-Warbler. Also a Ring-Ouzel (quite a rarity here) between here and Broughton.

May 1st.—Mr. J. Whitaker was much interested in the great number of Lesser Whitethroats we noticed when driving into Warwickshire. We heard several Nightingales by the roadside. Only saw one Crested Grebe on Clattercote Reservoir. Little Grebe chattering.

3rd.—Received news from Mr. Darbey of a Golden Oriole

(a fine male) shot in an orchard at Southrop, near Letchlade, which is only just over our county borders, on the 23rd April.

5th.—A Great Tit has eleven eggs in a nest in one of my boxes; the eggs were piled up to-day.

6th.—Nightingale reported as heard in our paddock-walk (an old haunt, long deserted, during the years this bird became unaccountably rare in this district) a week ago. Swift appeared.

7th.—Among some young Rooks shot to-day two had some yellowish white on their bills, and one had a little white on the chin. A Mistle-Thrush has built a nest in a pear-tree trained like a pergola across the kitchen-garden path, seven feet from the ground. To match the green leaves of the pear-tree, the nest is formed externally almost entirely of green moss. There is a very little mud in the walls, and a few bits of haulm and a bit of tape. The nest is very inconspicuous, but my attention was drawn to it by seeing several bits of green moss dropped on the path. The nest had one egg in it to-day. I left home the next day, and on my return found it had been deserted.

8th.—Mr. Henry Blea, who keeps the 'White Lion' inn here, happened this morning to see a case containing a pair of Stone Curlews with young which I have in the hall. He then told me that thirty or forty years ago he lived on a farm near Heythrop, and in those days the "Curloo" (as this bird is called in Oxfordshire) frequented Cold Harbour and Showell farms. These farms are at an elevation of about 600 ft. above the sea, and between them the land rises to over 700 ft. The soil is the stony "stone-brash," and the country very open and bleak. Mr. Blea said there were never to his knowledge more than one or two pairs of Curloos there each year. He described the open country they frequented, the pace they ran, their habit of getting up quietly and stealing away, their two eggs laid on the bare ground, and the great difficulty he had in finding the two or three lots of eggs he ever found. I may here mention that two eggs of this species, taken at Ipsden on the Chilterns about the year 1887, have come into my possession. They are the only Oxfordshire examples of these eggs I have seen.

12th.—News from Mr. Darbey of a Ring-Ouzel shot at Bletchington on or about the 4th inst.

June 3rd.—Examined a Pied Woodpecker and a Hawfinch,

shot at Wroxton this spring. Heard and saw the Nightingale in the paddock-walk, which has been there now for a month.

6th.—Mistle-Thrush singing well this evening.

7th.—Again singing.

8th.—Nightingale reported as unusually common at Great Tew and South Newington Hill.

9th.—Heard Wood-Wren in a mixed plantation of beech and some oak at Tadmarton Camp. Two Nightingales there this spring. Mistle-Thrush singing.

10th.—Some young Starlings in a box against the wall, only five feet from the ground. Mistle-Thrush sang well.

13th.—Bullfinch several times lately close to the house, I believe in consequence of the bird-cherry having much fruit on it this year. Saw one in the tree the next day.

15th, 16th, and 17th.—Mistle-Thrush still singing.

18th.—Two pairs of Nightingales in the cover at South Newington were very noisy with the "sleet" and the Edible Frog-like "turr."

24th.—A Barred Woodpecker noisy and excited all day in my neighbour's walnut-tree, and in trees in my garden. Possibly had young just out of the nest.

July 4th.—Mr. Fowler told me of one nest of the Marsh-Warbler, the young in which were hatched this morning. He believed a second pair had a nest.

14th.—Saw a pair of Red-backed Shrikes on the telegraph-wires below the Lessor Farm, Milcomb, a favourite haunt with these birds, which are scarce and local with us.

17th.—A covey of young Partridges could fly.

19th.—Very hot; 90° in the shade, 76° at 9 p.m. Swifts revelling in the hot evening.

24th.—Severe drought continues.

25th.—The hottest day I ever experienced in England; $91\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ in the shade. A fresh south wind and the very dry air made walking possible. The air at night was of the "well-cooked" kind that one knows in the South. Swifts delight in this weather, and scream loudly.

29th.—A good rain at last.

August 1st.—A soaking rain. A good deal of rain after this, and stormy weather for some days.

15th.—Swifts numerous and noisy.

17th.—Some Swifts.

18th.—None seen.

31st.—Flock of fourteen Mistle-Thrushes.

September 1st.—Many old Partridges without any young brood. Three Landrails killed. Saw a Wheatear (migrant).

4th.—Red-legged Partridges are more numerous than ever this year. I have seen two and a half and three brace killed in a day, a thing unheard of about here ten years ago.

5th.—A big flock of Peewits about the arable land. There are a few Clouded Yellow Butterflies about this year, and I have taken one Pale Clouded Yellow, the only one I ever saw in this district.

7th.—Five brace of young and one old Red-legged Partridge formed part of our bag at Milcomb to-day. Heard of four Landrails bagged near Rollwright a few days ago.

10th.—A young Cuckoo shot to-day in my presence at Milcomb was changing its plumage.

12th.—Many Mistle-Thrushes in straggling flocks.

21st.—A few Meadow-Pipits, the first noticed.

24th.—Many in the swedes.

27th.—Chiffchaff in song.

October 3rd.—Flock of about a score of Pied Wagtails; many Meadow-Pipits.

8th.—Hedge-Sparrow singing for some days lately.

9th.—Very warm; 70° in the shade.

11th.—News from Mr. Bartlett that he had stuffed for a lady's hat an adult Lesser Tern picked up at Croperdy a month ago.

19th.—Humming-bird Hawk Moth hovering over a bed of Michaelmas daisies about 10 a.m. Temperature up to 50° in the day.

24th.—Song-Thrushes singing fairly well.

26th.—News from Mr. Darbey of a Buzzard (of the dark type) trapped at Wytham on the 24th, and of a Death's-head Moth caught close to Carfax Church, Oxford, on the 16th. This is a very fine specimen, and is now in my possession.

28th.—Some Redwings and Fieldfares.

November 1st.—Examined a Partridge which was seen on October 25th, at breakfast-time, to drop down into a narrow

enclosed courtyard at the back of a birdstuffer's house in the High Street, Banbury. It was uninjured, but was easily caught. I also obtained the skin of an albino Greenfinch, killed near Oxford on or about the 2nd September. This specimen is white, tinged with yellow more or less all over, except on the end of the quill-feathers. The yellow is brightest on the shoulders and the edges of the primaries and wing-quills, where an ordinary bird has the brightest colours. Irides pink. Bill perhaps rather paler than usual; the legs and feet appear to have been pale flesh-colour, claws very pale.

8th.—News from Mr. Surman of a Dunlin shot at some clay-pits at Summertown on the 3rd.

10th.—Red Admiral Butterfly in the garden.

12th.—A Peregrine Falcon shot at Boarstall Decoy to-day, recorded in the 'Oxford Times.'

16th.—News from Mr. Surman of a Green Sandpiper shot at Sandford-on-Thames on the 8th, and a Great Crested Grebe on Port Meadow stream on the 12th.

22nd.—News from Mr. Fowler of an unusual number of Redpolls in the birch-trees in the parks at Oxford, and that on the previous day he saw a Water-Rail in a ditch at Kingham.

23rd.—Song-Thrushes sing well.

24th.—Singing well about 8 a.m. in a cold thick fog. Many Bullfinches about. The fruit crop this year has been exceptionally heavy. To say nothing of garden fruits, the crop of beech-mast and acorns has been remarkable, in the case of the latter with disastrous effects on the cattle in the fields where there are oak-trees, although sheep and pigs have done well and not suffered. The hedge-fruit is quite a sight—crabs, sloes (a very heavy crop), blackberries, &c.—while the haws redden the big hedges.

26th.—Song-Thrushes now singing grandly. Yesterday, and this morning between 7 and 8 a.m., it was, as an old farmer remarked, "quite a charm."

28th.—News from Mr. Darbey of another Peregrine Falcon (a bird of the year) shot at Boarstall yesterday.

30th.—Bullfinches chanting three double notes. During a day's shooting about Milcomb I met with Goldfinches three times. One bird sang, but poorly.

December 6th.—Examined at Mr. Bartlett's a well-pied

Blackbird. To judge from the plumage it was a female, and an old one, as it had a dull orange bill.

7th.—Very mild; 50°. In the afternoon a Blackbird sang fairly well. I had never previously heard one sing in December.

8th.—The 'Field' of this date contains a notice by "F.M.C." that a Grey Crow was shot at Henley-on-Thames on the 8th October, and a Puffin was picked up alive but exhausted on the 20th November.

12th.—Blackbird sang a little in a low tone; 52°, with a grey sky.

13th.—Examined, at Mr. Bartlett's, a beautiful drake Shoveler in the flesh, which had been shot on a pond at Wroxton. It was with another "less brightly coloured." This is a rare Duck in the north of the county.

20th.—Winter aconite flowering.

22nd.—Blackbird sang for some time in the afternoon. Song perfect, but rather low in tone. Temperature at the time 38°; air still.

27th.—Furious gale at night, and much rain.

28th.—Very rough stormy weather. While waiting for a Partridge-drive near Hook Norton, I counted eight Magpies as they came over a ridge of high ground in front of the guns.

29th.—*Galanthus elwesii* in bloom.

30th.—Rained all day and poured all night, with a furious gale from the north.

31st.—The gale gradually subsided, having done much damage. It knocked several conifers here out of the straight. The floods this morning are the biggest we have had for thirteen years. Some cottages with a foot of water in them. At Wickham Mill, on the Sorbrook, the occupier, who was born there, and has lived there all his life, being now fifty-seven, said the flood to-day was the highest he had known, and came up to the mill-door. Twenty years ago this would have meant flooded meadows for weeks, and hundreds of wildfowl; but now, with so much drainage, floods, although more frequent, run off very quickly.

(To be continued.)

NOTES AND QUERIES.

AVES.

Blackbird Laying on the Ground.—On April 26th, in the grounds of a friend at Claygate, I was shown a nest with four eggs of the Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) on the ground. The nest, so called, consisted simply of a hollow without any lining whatever scraped amongst the fallen pine-needles and trailing ivy in a shrubbery, the eggs being laid on the bare ground. They were evidently deserted when I saw them, but my friend's son told me he had put the old bird off the eggs, and the gardener also informed me he had twice seen it brooding on them. About a week previous to the discovery of the eggs my friend had pulled out a new empty nest of a Blackbird from a cypress close by, and I think it probable the owner, not having time to build a new one, laid her eggs on the ground a yard or two away from their destroyed intended home.—ROBERT H. READ (7, South Parade, Bedford Park, W.)

British Examples of the White-spotted Bluethroat.—Referring to the note of Mr. Nicoll on this subject in 'The Zoologist' for December last (p. 464), may I be allowed to state that the *first* British-killed example of the White-spotted Bluethroat was obtained at Scarborough, and described by the Rev. J. G. Tuck (Zool. June, 1876, p. 4956, and 'Field,' May 6th, 1876).—T. H. NELSON (The Cliffe, Redcar).

The Status of the Goldfinch (*Carduelis elegans*) in Britain.—

Essex.—Resident, local, not abundant; partly migratory; decreasing (Miller Christy, 1890).

Wiltshire.—Everybody knows: never so abundant as to beget familiarity: rapidly diminishing in numbers. Very rare in North Wilts (Canon Goddard). Not seen one for several years (Rev. A. C. Smith, 1887).

Devon.—Resident; formerly numerous; now scarce in most localities, except in autumn breeds. Decrease enlarged upon. A rare event to see an example of this once abundant bird (Rev. M. A. Mathew, 1892). Parfitt (1876) has it "frequent in orchards throughout the county."

Dorset.—In an imperfect copy I have of Mansel-Pleydell's 'Ornithology, &c., of Dorset,' he does not include it amongst his rarer birds of the county in 1875. But about 1887, in his complete work, 'The Birds of Dorsetshire,' he has it resident; more numerous since the Bird Acts (Wild Birds' Protection Act) passed.

Herefordshire.—D. Henry Graves Bull, in 1888 ('Notes on Birds of Herefordshire'). Fairly plentiful and generally distributed.

Buckingham.—Rev. B. Binges (1855) merely mentions it in his List, p. 103.

Devon.—Pidsley, in 1890. Resident, partly migratory; formerly numerous, but of late years a scarce bird. Decrease.

Sussex.—Borrer, 1891. Formerly very common, now comparatively rare; near Bryston not one hundred may now be seen, even at the most favourable time of the year. Diminution of the species.

Somerset.—Cecil Smith, in 1869. Not very uncommon; resident.

Cornwall.—Hearle Rodd, in 1880. Not a scarce bird in Cornwall; local.

Wilts.—Im Thurn in 1869. O.

Derbyshire.—Mr. Whitlock, in 1893. Principally known as a local autumn visitor. A few pairs breed in the south of the county, but only in very limited numbers. Formerly far more common. Practically unknown in some districts. In 1836 abundant, in 1863 still common at Burton-on-Trent. In the Peak district appears to be of uncertain occurrence, even in September. Partial extermination.

Northampton.—Lord Lilford, 1880-83. Decidedly less common, Decrease accounted for principally by the careful field-weeding of recent years, and birdcatchers.

East Kent.—Mr. Dowker, in 1889. Moderately common; not common of late.

Pembroke.—M. A. Mathew, in 1894. Common, resident; still about. Six nests in his grounds one summer.

Nottingham.—Sterland and Whitaker, in 1879. Common in parts.

Suffolk.—Babington. Generally distributed; not uncommon at Gazely, but rare at Livermore. Less abundant than formerly.

Oxford.—Aplin, in 1889. Resident, but also migratory; became exceedingly scarce, but increased again in last three or four years. Have kept up numbers in more secluded parts.

? *Durham*.—Prentis in 1894, in his 'Notes on the Birds of Rainham.' I do not often see a Goldfinch in the course of a year.

London.—Mr. Swann, in his 'Birds of London,' in 1893. Visitor on migration; decidedly rare as a nesting species. At Stratford "steadily on the increase"

London.—Hudson, in 1898 ; O. Pigott, in 1892 ; O.

Norfolk.—Stevenson, in 1866. By no means uncommon throughout the year.

Bucks and Berks.—Clark Kennedy, in 1868. Generally distributed in the two counties. Greatly decreased during the last ten years. More numerous in spring and autumn.

West Cheshire, Denbigh, and Flint.—Mr. Dobie, in 1893. Resident and generally distributed, but not common in West Cheshire. In Wirral a scarce resident ; a good many in autumn. Not common at Burton (West Cheshire). Common in Wales.

Stafford.—Mr. McAlldowie, in 1893. Partly migratory ; very rare in summer, but more numerous in winter. Breeds in the north of the county, but is very rare. Gradually becoming extinct in Stafford, according to Mr. Yates.

Norwood district, Surrey.—Mr. Aldridge writes :—“ Becoming scarcer every year. Remorselessly hunted down. Certainly rare.”

Yorkshire.—‘ Ackworth Birds.’ Mr. Arundel, in 1898. Previous to 1860 was plentiful, since then diminished in numbers, and has become scarce. Thinks it is still resident. The diminution towards extinction has been going on over the whole of Britain, and quotes J. E. Harting to the same effect, and Mr. Howard Saunders, who says it has “ undoubtedly decreased in numbers during the last half-century ” (‘ Manual,’ p. 173). Mr. Howard Saunders, however, records (1898) also that the Wild Birds’ Protection Act has operated in its favour during the past twelve years ; and adds, “ perhaps (also) agricultural depression.”

Lancashire.—Mitchell, in 1885, does not mention it.

Rutland.—Mr. Montagu Browne, in 1889, has it resident, but sparsely distributed. Even in Harley’s time it was “ increasingly rare.”

Northumberland.—Hancock, in 1874, had only seen it on two or three occasions. Casual visitant.

Lakeland.—Rev. H. A. Macpherson, in 1892. Thirty years before it was comparatively common, and nested freely from the Solway to the shores of Morecambe Bay, and even in the heart of the Lake District. Present stronghold is in the Eden Valley. Not met with on the south-eastern border, but stated to be slightly increasing at Underbarrow. “ Uniformly a very scarce bird.”

Sherwood Forest.—Sterland, in 1869. “ One of our commonest song-birds ” (p. 117). [No thought apparently of any decrease then—J. H. B.]

Birds of the Derwent Valley.—Mr. Robson, in 1896. "Casual visitant," and of doubtful occurrence in the rest of the county in summer. [Evidently rare—J. H. B.]

Bird Life of the Borders.—Abel Chapman, in 1888. Not mentioned in index.

Cumberland.—Rev. H. A. Macpherson and W. Duckworth, in 1886 (see also *Lakeland*, 1892). Locally resident; generally decreased of late years, though still numerous in the Eden Valley. A few pairs breed sporadically in the north of the county. Very absent still in Eden Valley.

—J. A. HARVIE-BROWN (Dunipace, Larbert, Stirlingshire, N.B.).

[Mr. Harvie-Brown, in a letter accompanying the above interesting excerpts, expresses his wish that our contributors might bring the status of the bird up to date, *viz.* to the end of last year. Any notes we may receive on the subject will be reserved for some completeness with other records, and then published together in a condensed form.—Ed.]

Lesser Redpoll nesting in Middlesex.—As there appear to be very few records of the nesting of *Linota rufescens* in Middlesex, I may mention that on June 28th last year I found a nest near Pinner. It was built in a furze-bush, and contained five eggs. As usual with nests of this species, it was lined with, and constructed very largely of, down from willow-catkins, with some bents and a few horsehairs.—ROBERT H. READ (7, South Parade, Bedford Park, W.).

A Habit of the Lesser Redpoll (*Linota rufescens*).—While looking through 'The Zoologist' for 1901, I noticed, on p. 316, an account of the rather mysterious disappearance of the eggs and lining of a Redpoll's nest. The writer of the note did not think the nest had been robbed, but came to the following conclusion:—"Mayhap the old birds may have removed it (*i. e.* the lining) to line a new nest subsequently to the eggs being taken from the old one." In reference to this remark, my experience with two pairs of Redpolls which I found breeding near Oxford a few years ago may be interesting. The following is a condensed account taken from my note-books:—On May 16th, 1898, a Lesser Redpoll's nest, which I had found a few days previously, contained three eggs. I took two of these, and substituted a Linnet's egg. On visiting the nest a few days later I saw the hen bird in the tree with some dry grass or roots in her bill, and on examining the nest I found that it had been considerably pulled about, and that both eggs had disappeared. A few days later nothing was left of the nest but its foundation, though the birds remained in the neighbourhood, as I

saw them frequently on subsequent occasions, and I feel sure they were building a new nest out of the materials of the old one, although a careful search failed to discover it.

About the 24th of May, not far from the spot where the first pair of Redpolls were breeding, I noticed a small nest in a young beech-tree, and on climbing to it I found it was a Redpoll's nest, which appeared to have been disturbed, and which had lost some of its lining. I noticed that the tree had been climbed, so the nest had evidently been robbed. On May 28th I again visited the same spot, and found that the nest had almost entirely disappeared—in fact, only a foundation was left—and I found among the topmost branches of a willow-bush, only a few yards from the beech-tree, a new Redpoll's nest just ready for eggs. On May 30th this nest contained one egg.

We have here instances to show that the Lesser Redpoll will not tolerate any interference with her nest and eggs. I was very careful to disturb the first pair mentioned above as little as possible, and removed the two eggs with a teaspoon. The evidence from these three cases also goes to prove that this species, when disturbed in nesting operations, will remove the materials from the spot which has been discovered, and use them in forming a new home. What becomes of the eggs is less clear, but I suppose it is possible that they are transferred also. If I could have found the new nest of my first pair mentioned above, and it had contained the Linnet's egg, the mystery would have been solved.

In 'The Zoologist' for 1894, on p. 228, is a note on the breeding of the Lesser Redpoll, and it appears very possible that the birds acted in the same way as the three pairs already mentioned. It would be very interesting to hear the experience of other field naturalists on this presumed habit of the Lesser Redpoll. Is it a common habit among birds? I have studied birds out of doors as long as I can remember, but cannot recollect having observed a parallel case. It requires, however, very careful observation to prove that the *original makers* of the nest are removing it to a safer place, and that it is not any chance bird on the look-out for materials which has destroyed the deserted nest.—F. L. BLATHWAYT (Lincoln).

Migration of Jays.—It is interesting that a very noticeable increase in the number of Jays should have been observed in Hants and Dorset, as a similar increase occurred in this part of Sussex. *Garrulus glandarius* is always fairly well represented in this district, but an unusual number put in an appearance during the first week in October, an influx which extended well into November, since when I have only

observed the usual number. The behaviour of these birds differed somewhat from that generally observable in the species; they were mostly single birds, not so easily alarmed, and frequented trees in open situations to an extent not usual with the Jay. — ROBERT MORRIS ("Fernhurst," Uckfield, Sussex).

WITH reference to the note on this subject (Zool. 1902, p. 434), Mr. Corbin may be interested to know that we have had more Jays than usual about here last autumn. Very few breed in this immediate neighbourhood, but more visit us every autumn. Last year I noted in my diary that there were a good many about on the 8th October, and on the 29th, that there were Jays all about, and "clearly a migration." On the 4th November I saw several on the side of the parish where I only occasionally see Jays, and they were about there and very noisy on the 2nd December. We have not many acorns this year.—O. V. APLIN (Bloxham, Oxon).

Variety in Domestic Geese.—The tenant of my Rectory Farm has lately sublet some of his fields to a poulterer, who turned down more than a thousand Geese on them, Though Goose-farming on a large scale is an ancient industry in East Anglia, it is a novelty here; so I went down to see the birds, and was surprised to notice that many of them were clearly of Bean-Goose descent, having the brown plumage of that species, with the black and yellow beak ending with a black nail. The Geese, I was told, were not bred in England, but brought over when young from Holland; and it seems pretty clear that in that country Bean-Geese, either captured in nets or winged birds, must have bred freely in confinement with ordinary Geese. I am not aware that any similar instance has been recorded.—JULIAN G. TUCK (Tostock Rectory, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk).

Wild Swans at Rainworth.—On Nov. 29th I was standing at the front door, when I heard notes of birds, and on looking up I saw, at a great height, a flight of what I thought were Wild Geese. I at once saw they meant to settle on the lake below the house, which is a beautiful piece of water in sight of a river, and covering about twenty-five acres. After two or three flights round they came against a hill covered with firs, and I at once saw they were Swans. There were twenty-one of them, six cygnets, and the rest pure white. After a great deal of flying round in great circles they settled, and, as I wanted a Notts-killed specimen, my son, after a talk, decided to take his rifle. He had an easy stalk behind banks of rhododendrons, and got within fifty yards of seven. when, picking out the largest, he sent a ball through him. The rest rose with great flappings, and two more were missed. They now were well

on wing, and about forty yards high, when he sent a ball right through one, which fell with a great splash in the lake, and, with loud cries, the remainder winged their flight away. On getting them, we found they were Bewick's Swans—a fine male, weighing 12 lb. and a cygnet. We were very pleased with ourselves, and soon a big case will be added to this collection. On Tuesday, Dec. 23rd, when Pike-fishing on lake at Welbeck Abbey, six Swans flew over the boat, but as there are any quantity of Mute Swans on this lake, I did not take much notice, till I heard a loud "whoop"; they settled near about thirty tame ones, and began to feed, now and again giving the loud cry "whoop whoop." They did not mix with other Swans, but kept a short way from them. When I left off fishing I walked up lake-side, and they only swam about three hundred yards away from bank. They were Whoopers, five mature and one cygnet. I noticed they looked much bigger than Bewick, which they are, and sat higher on water. The lake was let down to perhaps fifty acres, and on this were hundreds of Duck—quite five hundred Tufted Duck, besides many Pochards and several hundred Common Duck. I also saw a pair of Pintail. It was great luck to see both species of Wild Swans on the water, and in an inland county, within a month, and a treat I most thoroughly enjoyed. I have never seen Wild Swans on the water before, and only twice on wing in this county.—J. WHITAKER (Rainworth Lodge, Notts).

Fork-tailed Petrel in Somerset.—A specimen of the Fork-tailed Petrel (*Cymochorea leucorrhoa*) was forwarded in the flesh a few days ago by my brother from Cadbury, in Somersetshire. It was picked up on Nov. 30th by his shepherd in one of the fields in an exhausted condition, and died soon after being brought into the house. As Cadbury is some twenty-five miles from the nearest point on the coast, the bird had doubtless been blown inland by the recent heavy gales, but whether from the Bristol or English Channel is uncertain, most probably, however, the former.—ROBERT H. READ (7, South Parade, Bedford Park, W.).

Notes from Lincolnshire.—I have lately seen the following birds which have been sent for preservation to Mr. Nash, the local bird-stuffer:—A buff variety of the Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), shot on Dec. 11th near Brauston. The bird, which is a male, is chiefly of a pale buff-colour, shading off almost to white on the tail-feathers, and the freckles on the breast are of the same pale colour. The flanks are of the usual rich chestnut-red, which contrasts strongly with the rest of the plumage. An adult male Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris* was shot on

Dec. 1st near Washingborough, a few miles out of Lincoln ; and about Dec. 14th an immature female Black-throated Diver (*Colymbus arcticus*) was shot on the coast near Boston. On or about Nov. 27th a male Great Shearwater (*Puffinus major*) was shot not far from the mouth of the River Welland. This seems an unusually late date for the occurrence of this species.—F. L. BLATHWAYT (Lincoln).

REPTILIA.

Notes on the Pine-Snake in Confinement.—This Snake (*Coluber melanoleucus*), a native of North America, grows to a length of about seven feet. It is very beautifully marked, and has very often—rare in Snakes—a perfectly white throat, although the greater part of the under surface is mottled with salmon-pink. The colour above is whitish, with large dark brown spots edged with black ; the scales on the back are keeled, though on the sides they are quite flat, and there are also along the sides a number of smaller dark brown spots. The specimen which I possess was imported about six months ago, and is now very tame and gentle, and never attempts to bite. Its food consists almost entirely of young mice, and occasionally a small rat ; but it greatly prefers the first-named prey.

This Snake seems to possess elasticity of the jaws in a much lesser degree than other Snakes. A young Boa which I have at the present time, about two feet long, will take a half-grown rat with comparative ease, but the Pine-Snake, measuring six feet, has often failed to swallow a rat of the same size. My specimen always makes an attempt to constrict its prey, but generally unsuccessfully ; this is doubtless due to the difference in size between the Snake and its prey.

This species has the character of being somewhat of a cannibal, but I cannot corroborate this by my own experience, though a friend who kept two Grass-Snakes (*T. natrix*) with a *C. melanoleucus* found one morning the two smaller Snakes dead, with the appearance of having been crushed. My specimen has only cast once since I had it, the whole process taking some time.

The Pine-Snake is very hardy, mine being kept at from 55° to 60°, but even if kept below this temperature it still remains quite lively. It can also give a very loud hiss. This Snake, both from my own experience and that of others, is a very suitable inmate for the vivarium, not only on account of its hardiness, but also by the ease with which it may be tamed.—B. J. HORTON (305, Stratford Road, Sparbrook, Birmingham).

PISCES.

Occurrence of *Box vulgaris* on the Norfolk Coast.—In the middle of December last (1902) a specimen of this fish was found dead on the beach near Cromer. It measured 9 in. in length and $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. in depth. Although the "Bogue" has been met with several times on the south coast of England, I am not aware that it has hitherto been recorded for the Norfolk waters.—THOS. SOUTHWELL (Norwich).

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Mammals, Reptiles, and Amphibians of Suffolk.—Being engaged upon a short account of the above for the 'Victoria History of the Counties of England,' I should be most grateful for the loan of any local lists, however imperfect and fragmentary. Any information bearing on the subject would be thankfully received. The Bats especially seem to have received little attention, and my list is at present a very short one. Any well-authenticated records of the rarer species are greatly needed.—G. T. ROPE (Blaxhall, Tunstall, Suffolk).

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

Index Animalium ; sive index nominum quæ ab A.D. MDCCLVIII. generibus et speciebus animalium imposita sunt," &c. A CAROLO DAVIES SHERBORN, confectus. Cambridge University Press.

IN these pages (vol. v. p. 39), we drew attention to this great work, then in progress; the first volume is now before us, consisting of about 1250 pages, and containing some 60,000 referential entries. The objects of the work, as set forth in the preface, are ' (a) to provide zoologists with a complete list of all the generic and specific names that have been applied by authors to animals since Jan. 1st, 1758; (b) to give an exact date for each page quotation; (c) to give a quotation for each reference sufficiently exact to be intelligible alike to the specialist and to the layman."

How is it possible to review or write a general notice of this giant undertaking?; how few can realize the value of what to an outsider will appear 60,000 bald references?; and what still fewer readers can appraise the awful labour and bibliographical capacity that makes such a publication practicable? It is absolutely the life of a man surrendered to the cause of zoology in one of its most real, but certainly least popular aspects—assuredly not a usual method of to-day. And yet this is one of the most important zoological publications in recent years, it makes a mighty concordance for the use of specialists, and affords a *vade mecum* in zoological technics. In the present study of scientific bibliography we are often hindered by the proposed reforms in nomenclature by writers who correct their predecessors to-day and again themselves to-morrow, in fact the subject has been not less neglected by qualified students than obscured by a plague of commenting flies. We have now what we may call a rabbinical index to the scientific names proposed for animals, one that will be accepted as the last word on an abstruse and

dry subject to which most zoologists have frequently to refer, and one which all descriptive writers will care to have near them. We trust the author will complete his self-imposed task, and although the labour is prodigious, and the circulation of the published results only limited, he has the satisfaction of knowing that the volume—and we trust volumes—must reach the hands of those for whom it is designed, and long after we and our views are forgotten, it is likely that the zoologists of the future will often advise on this subject—"consult Sherborn."

A Naturalist in Indian Seas, or Four Years with the Royal Indian Marine Survey Ship "Investigator." By A. ALCOCK, M.B., LL.D., F.R.S. John Murray.

It is more than thirty years since Collingwood published his 'Rambles of a Naturalist on the Shores and Waters of the China Sea,' the perusal of which we recall as we take up Dr. Alcock's volume on a similar subject, pursued, however, under very different methods. For since the first date, the "Challenger," amongst other expeditions, has shown what can be done by deep-sea dredging, and the equipment of the "Investigator" is largely due to that impulse. Moreover, many biological facts and propositions in relation to animal life have been gained since Collingwood's time, with which Dr. Alcock has illuminated his narrative.

There is still one great unexplored area of this planet, and it is questionable whether mankind will ever have but a fragmentary and inadequate knowledge of the fauna of oceanic abysses. The same gloomy depths, which many believe to shroud the remains of an Atlantis, must certainly contain animal life which a dredge is quite incapable to retrieve from the ocean floors. The sea has not yet given up her life! It is this mystery which, even taken alone, renders these pages of such surpassing interest to the zoologist, who, like Dante,

"Turns to the perilous wide waste, and stands
At gaze."

The cruises of the "Investigator" here recorded have been confined to the Bay of Bengal, with particular reference to the

Zool. 4th ser. vol. VII., January, 1903.

Andaman and Laccadive Seas, where the dredge was freely used, and its captures have provided notable illustrations for the volume. We are given much interesting information as to the animal life on the Adaman and Coco Islands, while the book has focussed so much information on the oceanic fauna, that we do not know where else to find such a readable introduction to the whole subject. We have long expected to hear of the Shark interfering with peaceful dredging operations, and we read that near False Point, "our seine, which we used sometimes to lay out as a drift-net, was, with its sinkers, weighing over 450 lbs., carried bodily away by an enormous Shark, round whose remains it was found some days afterwards, tied in a hundred knots, past all surgery." On the beach of South Sentinel Islet, Dr. Alcock was fortunate enough to witness the emergence of a brood of newly-hatched Turtles, "a swarm of little objects, looking like beetles, which all with one consent made for the sea."

The illustrations are ample, and are examples of a very successful method compared with the whilom wood-block.

Catalogue of the Library of the Zoological Society of London.
(Fifth Edition.) Published by the Society.

THIS publication is really a contribution to a knowledge of zoological bibliography. It contains the titles of about 11,000 different works now in the Society's Library, exclusive of periodicals, which are scheduled in an appendix. The Library, it is stated, now contains about 25,000 volumes. The catalogue has been prepared by the Society's librarian, Mr. F. H. Waterhouse, with his usual care and accuracy, and he has made the catalogue of a library a welcome guest for the book-shelves of any zoologist. The points on which it may generally be consulted are: (1) date and localities of publication; (2) complete titles and full names of authors; (3) many good cross references; (4) useful annotations, or references to other writers and publications, as to dates of issue when separate parts have been published of works catalogued; (5) references to the original channel of publication of works afterwards issued and distributed in separate form, &c.

Index Zoologicus: an alphabetical list of names of genera and subgenera proposed for use in zoology as recorded in the 'Zoological Record,' 1880-1900; together with other names not included in the 'Nomenclator Zoologicus' of S. H. Scudder. Compiled by C. O. WATERHOUSE, and edited by D. SHARP, M.A., F.R.S. Zoological Society, London, and Gurney & Jackson.

WE have given the complete title of this publication, as it best explains the scope and reason of the work. Few descriptive zoologists are unconscious of what it means to provide a new generic title. To find an applicable name previously unused, having reference to some peculiarity of a representative species, and rendered according to the canons of the Greek and Latin tongues, is not too easy. John Wesley is reported to have said, in reference to musical hymnology, that the "devil had secured all the best tunes." In classificatory terminology it is practically certain that previous writers have appropriated all the best names, and consequently the need is urgent that we can refer easily to the generic jargon of our predecessors before adding to the awful list. Scudder, in 1882, gave us such a list to the close of the year 1879, and the present work not only supplements that, but also brings the record to the end of the year 1900. We thank Mr. Waterhouse for his conscientious labours in this dreary field.

Monographie des Cynipides d'Europe et d'Algérie. Par L'Abbé J.-J. KIEFFER. Paris: A. Hermann.

Monographie des Mutillides d'Europe et d'Algérie. Par ERNEST ANDRÉ. Paris: A. Hermann.

THESE two thick volumes form a considerable addition to our knowledge of the Palæarctic Hymenoptera, and, both being descriptive of the same order of insects, may be best noticed together.

The *Cynipidæ* are perhaps generally known as Gall-flies, though some are parasitic on other insects. It was once supposed that the galls we all so frequently see on some trees were of purely vegetable origin, though now their true hymenopterous cause is known to most school-boys. The author of the first book under

notice has thoroughly discussed the bionomics of these interesting insects, and has produced a work which is very much more than a mere description of species, and one which will afford much valuable information to the botanist as well as the entomologist. L'Abbe Kieffer has treated his subject very thoroughly, and has provided good bibliographical references to what other workers have written on the subject. The volume is enriched with twenty-seven plates, and may be described as a book for all interested in galls and Gall-flies.

Mon. André's volume is devoted to a large subfamily of fossorial Hymenoptera, more or less parasitic in habits, and exhibiting a marked dissimilarity between the sexes. It thus appeals to entomologists as a rule, and to hymenopterists in particular. To those zoologists, few indeed!, who follow Darwin and Wallace—most frequently at a distance—in an encyclopædic or universal survey of the science, such a book escapes from the restricted study of the specialist, and becomes material for great generalizations. This is not the purpose, but is probably the true salvation of a monograph, and marks its general canonization. To know everything about one subject, and a little about all, is perhaps the only possibility of scholarship, and is too frequently the despair of a zoologist. Mon. André's book is a good brick for such an edifice, and is distinctly a treatise which will be studied by the specialist.

EDITORIAL GLEANINGS.

THE 'Zoological Record' for 1901, edited by Dr. David Sharp, F.R.S., &c., was published towards the end of the year 1902. It forms a bulky volume, and is the best evidence we have of zoological enterprise and industry. The vast growth in zoological publication is shown by a paragraph in the preface. In 1871 the list of periodicals inserted by Professor Newton numbered 201, and occupied less than six pages, whilst in the volume for 1901 upwards of 1000 are enumerated, and account for 52 pages. The number of new generic names registered in 1870 was a little more than 700; for 1901 no fewer than 2102 are recorded. The numbers of papers published relating to different Orders give some idea of the present trend in zoology:—

TITLES.					
Mammalia	...	...	...	...	361
Aves	...	...	...	...	803
Reptilia and Batrachia	...	...	...	...	250
Pisces	...	...	...	...	244
Mollusca	...	...	...	...	675
Brachiopoda	...	...	...	...	98
Crustacea	...	...	...	...	263
Arachnida	...	...	...	...	217
Insecta	...	...	...	...	1514

Dr. Sharp has made one reform in his subject-index for which we are deeply grateful. The word "mimicry" once denoted a philosophical conception; a few enthusiastic writers seem determined that this shall be no longer possible. The Editor of the 'Zoological Record' prefers the use of the word "resemblance."

WE have received a reprint from the 'Transactions of the Hull Scientific and Field Naturalists' Club' of a paper entitled "The Birds of Bempton Cliffs," by E. W. Wade. This is a beautifully illustrated brochure relating to the famed chalk cliffs of the East Riding, the birds found there, and the adventurous men who pursue the "dreadful trade" of egg-collecting from the face of the cliffs. It can be purchased separately at a small cost.

OUR well-known contributor, Mr. Robert Service, of Maxwelltown, Dumfries, has sent us a revised copy of his "Vertebrate Zoology of Kirkcudbrightshire," reprinted from Maxwell's Guide-Book to the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. As the author remarks—"Probably there is no other tract of similar extent in the British Islands wherein may be found so rich an assemblage of vertebrate animals as there is in Kirkcudbrightshire." To a zoological visitor this publication is a necessity, and, what is more, an exhaustive and trustworthy acquisition.

AT the Annual Meeting of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, held at Hull on Wednesday, the 10th December, Mr. W. Denison Roebuck, F.L.S., was presented with a handsome testimonial in recognition of his past services as Secretary of the Union, and Editor of the 'Naturalist.' The presentation took the form of a beautifully illuminated address, in book form, and a clock and bronzes. References were made by many speakers to the ability with which Mr. Roebuck had worked in the interests of the Union. The new Secretary is Mr. T. Sheppard, F.G.S., of the Municipal Museum, Hull, and the 'Naturalist' will in future be edited by Mr. Sheppard and Mr. T. W. Woodhead, F.L.S., of Huddersfield. The President for 1903 is Mr. Roebuck.

THE following is the latest contribution to the tale of the great Sea Serpent?—narratives which we propose to regularly chronicle, without comment, for future comparison and digest.

Extract from the log of the second officer of the s.s. Fort Salisbury:—October 28, 1902, 3.5 a.m.—Dark object, with long, luminous trailing wake, thrown in relief by a phosphorescent sea, seen ahead, a little on starboard bow. Look-out reported two masthead lights ahead. These two lights, almost as bright as a steamer's lights, appeared to shine from two points in line on the upper surface of the dark mass. Concluded dark mass was a whale, and lights phosphorescent. On drawing nearer, dark mass and lights sank below the surface. Prepared to examine the wake in passing with binoculars. Passed about forty to fifty yards on port side of wake, and discovered it was the scaled back of some huge monster slowly disappearing below the surface. Darkness of the night prevented determining its exact nature, but scales of apparently 1 ft. diameter, and dotted in places with barnacle growth, were plainly discernible. The breadth of the body showing above water tapered from about 30 ft. close abaft, where the dark mass had appeared to about 5 ft. at the extreme end visible. Length roughly

about 500 ft. to 600 ft. Concluded that the dark mass first seen must have been the creature's head. The swirl caused by the monster's progress could be distinctly heard, and a strong odour like that of a low-tide beach on a summer day pervaded the air. Twice along its length the disturbance of the water and a broadening of the surrounding belt of phosphorus indicated the presence of huge fins in motion below the surface. The wet, shiny back of the monster was dotted with twinkling phosphorescent lights, and was encircled with a band of white phosphorescent sea. Such are the bare facts of the passing of the Sea Serpent in latitude 5 deg. 31 min. S., longitude 4 deg. 42 min. W., as seen by myself, being officer of the watch, and by the helmsman and look-out man.—A. H. RAYMER, Second Officer.

Mr. S. G. Stephens (master of the Fort Salisbury) writes in reference to Mr. Raymer's narrative: "I can only say that he is very earnest on the subject, and certainly has, together with look-out and helmsman, seen something in the water of a huge nature as specified."—*Daily Mail*.

THE development among animals, and especially among birds, of purely ornamental wind-bags, used as adjuncts in courtship, forms the theme of an article in 'Knowledge' for January, by Mr. W. P. Pyecraft, who writes:—"These wind-bags, which, almost without exception, may be inflated and deflated at the will of the animal, differ much in the nature of their origin. . . . Take the Common Pigeon, for example. Could anything appear more silly than the strutting, bowing, and cooing of the cock aided by this very practice of filling his gullet with intoxicating draughts of the morning air, the which swell his neck to unduly large proportions, and apparently, on this account, make him so much the more fascinating? With the Pigeon tribe, no special receptacle is provided for the indrawn air. . . . The present greatness of the crop, we would point out, is due not so much to the efforts of the prancing bird as to the care and selection of the breeder. . . . A still more remarkable gullet pouch is that of the Frigate-Bird of the Tropics. Bare externally, of a vivid scarlet colour, and capable of being inflated till it is nearly as large as the rest of the body, this pouch is an invaluable asset to its possessor when seeking a mate. For here, as elsewhere, the successful suitor is he who makes the most of his peculiar charms; the prize falling to him who is able to display the biggest and most brilliantly coloured pouch. Only the males wear this ornament, which is retained only during the breeding season. At this time a lively competition appears to take place, a

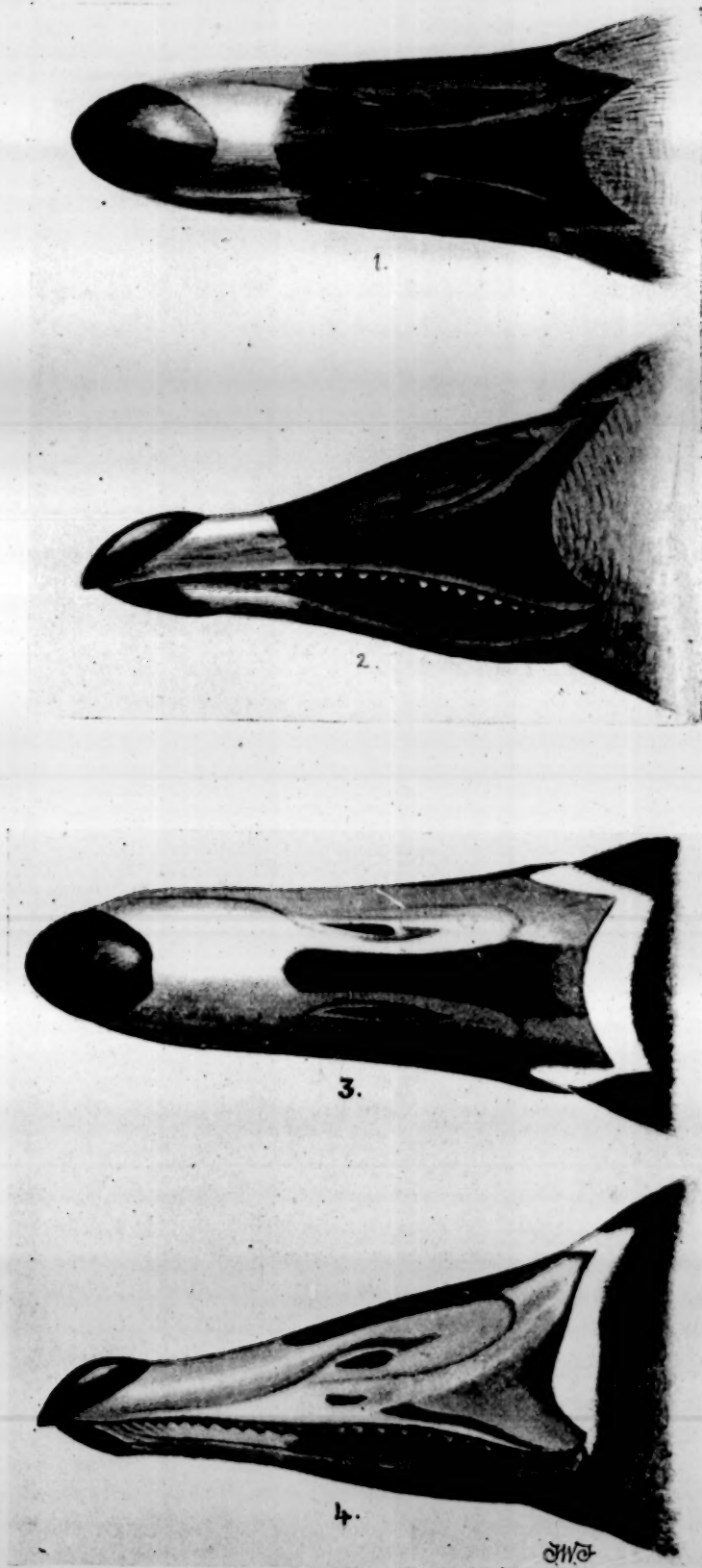
dozen or so of these birds crowding together in a tree, and greeting the approach of their prospective mates with inflated pouches and drooping wings, accompanied by a peculiar apology for a song, described as a sort of 'wow-wow-wow-wow,' and a noise resembling the sound of castanets, which is made by a violent chattering of the horny beak. The pouch of the Frigate-Bird is formed by the upper end of the gullet, and appears to be closed behind by a peculiar arrangement of muscular fibres to form what is known as a sphincter muscle. These muscles close up the tube of the windpipe much as the mouth of a bag is closed by means of a double string."

MR. J. L. BONHOTE, in "Field Notes on some Bahama Birds," published in the January issue of the 'Avicultural Magazine,' has given a good illustration and some interesting notes on the nesting of the Flamingo in those islands.

THE last November issue of the 'Irish Naturalist' is devoted to a special report of the recent meeting of the British Association at Belfast.

THE following excerpt is from an article by Cary Coles in the 'Farmer and Stockbreeder Year Book for 1903':—

"As a proof of the hardihood and prolificness of Hampshire Downs, I will give the result of the Shepherd's Prize Competition of the Hampshire Down Sheep Breeders' Association for 1902:—Dec. 1st: 56 flocks, containing 26,785 ewes in the usual proportion of mixed ages, were entered, and on May 4th the decrease by death or sale 2.34 per cent. only, and the increase of lambs 116.82 per cent. on the ewes entered Dec. 1st, 1901. The results from 47 flocks of ewe tegs for the same period are also a very good illustration, the number entered being 8886, and the total decrease between Dec. 1st and May 4th, 64 sheep, only .72 per cent.; and I know as a certain fact that this number practically, as far as losses by death are concerned, should have been reduced to 54, as I sold ten ewe tegs from my flock entry that were shipped to United States in April; otherwise there was no loss in my tegs or in sixteen of the other flocks during the five months. In one flock of Hampshire ewes, principally six and seven years old sheep, their prolificness as published in the 'Farmer' was, I certainly think, remarkable, they breeding at the rate of 175 per cent. of lambs from about 200 ewes. Previous to its being published, I heard of this privately from an eminent Hampshire Down breeder, who saw the ewes with their lambs."



BRITISH BEAN-GESE.
1, 2.—*Anser segetum*, ♂. 3, 4.—*Anser arvensis*, ♂.